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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the details of a series of lessons for teaching the passive voice to speakers of other languages. A specific plan entitled "From Repetition to Meaningful Use: A Suggested Progression" includes a series of yes/no questions and progresses both from teacher-directed conversation to student-student conversation and from the reality of the teacher to that of the student. Also included is a series of pictures which give students an opportunity to develop a slot manipulation facility in a conversational solicit. (TS)

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AN ORAL APPROACH TO THE PASSIVE VOICE AT BEGINNING LEVELS

a paper presented by

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CS 202 037

One makes certain assumptions when developing an approach and they surely should be stated. One of my pet assumptions is that language will be learned most efficiently and the learning will have the most durability if classroom activities have transferability to reality. What I believe I mean by that is that one should select those activities for students to perform in class on the basis of the likelihood that the students might be asked to perform the same kind of activity again out of class.

Since I can't remember any time in my life when I've been asked to complete a substitution drill -- in fact, I had been speaking English for, well, more than twenty-five years when I found out what the thing was, I do not occupy class time in this endeavor that students will never meet again.

And somewhere in the archives of the profession of TESOL, I'm certain that we could find volumes of minimal pair drills -- as well as in-depth explanations of what in the name of peace minimal pairs are. Again, I'll have to state that I was well into my advanced English-speaking stage when I heard of them. I became truly intrigued with the precise contrasts which linguists demonstrated minimal pairs could illustrate. But I was quite certain that knowledge of these beauties had had little to do with my language acquisition.

I found, however, that I could accept a number of activities involving questions and answers. Furthermore, I subjectively believed that I could

do without a rigorous scientific study to validate the notion that students must cope with questions in real life.

At the same time, I was cognizant of what the linguists had been after. I believe an earlier assumption must have been that after a certain amount of acquaintance with substitution drills, language learners would have a certain amount of facility in moving words here and there in different slots in a structure. It may be valid, that students do acquire the facility to move words around a structure, but that doesn't insure communicative competence.

I feel that, with a set of analogous realia, pictures or situation, and with conditions set for question and answer tasks, a student could be given numerous opportunities to ask and answer in one, or a limited number of, structures. Thus, a slot manipulation facility could be achieved, but it would be in a conversational solicit, not in a mechanical drill.

Furthermore, one of the most basic grammatical "happenings" in the English language -- the shifting of the X-word -- would necessarily be a part of every lesson if questions were included.

Additionally, I assumed that the efficiency of the learning would be increased if the utterances were spoken realistically. I decided that if students were required to produce little, in quantity of structure, one could aim for the production to take place at normal speed and intonation, with all the reductions that native speakers use. That would leave no

recognition gaps to be filled in by the students on their own between the classroom and the real world.

Thus, an approach, a routine, a step-by-step progression took shape. I have used it with absolute beginners -- first hour, first night -- but I prefer to think of it as appropriate whenever the language is new, not only when the students are new.

In other words, I feel that even when a student is in an intermediate stage of language acquisition. there are new things for him to meet in the language. When he does, I think he ought to have the opportunity to listen to it, to repeat it, and then he ought to have the practice of answering and asking questions with it about some meaningful realia or situation.

I have prepared this paper as an approach at beginning levels -- because more new things are encountered there than at other levels -- but I really feel that the approach works well whenever one wishes to introduce a new item, at any level.

A step-by-step outline is included in the hand-out that is being distributed now. I would add only that I follow the steps carefully when the students are beginners. When they are more advanced, a more random mix of these same tasks can be employed instead of the careful preparation.

This progression of steps through statements, yes/no questions and WH questions is not the only progression that is happening in this approach.

There is also a built-in movement from teacher-directed, teacher-centered conversation to student-student conversation.

A third progression that is included is a movement from the realia that was selected by the teacher to the reality of the students' environment and backgrounds.

Eventually a lesson strategy emerges which has taken into account all of these elements. But it also has to be meshed with a number of other variables. What true content can be naturally expressed with the structure I want to present? What can be asked and answered early which will require the manipulation of only a few slots? What vocabulary items can be added as we go along? Which previously-studied structures can be incorporated meaningfully? How can I move it to communicative practice without losing accuracy?

With so many goals in mind, I find it impossible to say much more about this approach unless I become lesson-specific. I have chosen to share with you the details of a series of lessons on the passive voice, though this approach is in no way limited to the passive.

Aside from the fact that you may be a little weary of "What is it?," I chose these passive forms because I am usually disappointed in the kinds of lessons I find in published materials for teaching the passive.

Endless exercises for changing active to passive and back again is, I believe, the kind of strategy that is readily available. Think back, if you

will, to my original goal of transferability to reality. I have yet to hear in real life a conversation of two utterances, initiated with an active form and responded to with a passive version of the same thing placing the actor in final position preceded by "by."

My imagination brings forth possibilities like:

A. My sister chose this godawful wallpaper on the living room wall.

B. Oh, you mean this godawful wallpaper on the living room wall was chosen by your sister?

And once my imagination brings this forth, it is immediately rejected. But, I must add that even this exchange -- which I cannot accept -- has something that the usual exercises exclude. It is prefaced with, "Oh, do you mean ..." and the repetition of the idea is changed to a question. Such conversational additions might be one way to "save" a few of the active/passive manipulations that have been put into print -- a few.

Another one of my assumptions is that in many instances we employ the passive because we simply couldn't be less interested in the actor. So I looked for a content in which, as a rule, no one would be significantly concerned with finding out who did it.

I selected one concerning the crops that are grown and the products that are made in a few states of the mainland U. S. A. The maps on pages 2 and 3 of your hand-out are a sample of the visual cues that I've used for

this lesson. And page 4 lists the structures that are employed.

Some teachers might use only the singular items on one map at first. Just how fast one would mix both singular and plural and present both made and grown depends upon the teacher and the class. I like to introduce that much quite soon in order that I might move to step 11 of the progression -- applying these same questions to the students' worlds. As I've indicated on page 4, I ask about their countries at first, then apply it to their home-towns.

Drawing upon the common knowledge of adults, it is also possible to ask and answer questions about the famous products of the world, that is, French perfume, Italian shoes, Belgian linen, Dutch chocolate, Thai silk, English gin, . . . etc.

At this point, with adults, one can often add new kinds of parallel information without any pictures or supplementary cues. Diamonds aren't grown and they aren't made. They're mined, like coal and gold. More specialized vocabulary can be introduced. Yes, gin is made in England, but we usually say distilled. Sugar isn't distilled, it's refined.

Thus, the at first rigorous adherence to pictures, repetition and structural control makes it possible for a real information seeking/giving experience at the end of a class segment. I see this as maximal use of a minimal part of the language. And my assumption is that while it may be a minimal part, the fact that it is employed maximally makes it likely that it is learned more thoroughly.

I use bits and pieces from mailers and catalogs for a second lesson which again employs "Where was it made?" but adds, "What was it made of?"

Notice that the salad bowls on page 6 are not identified. I recommend such a strategy every now and then in order that the questioning process has more credibility. The question is most legitimate because they truly don't know. Answers prefaced with "I think" or "Maybe" can easily be taught, as well as "might be" or "could be." A minimal understanding of these sometimes troublesome modals becomes noticeably easy under these conditions.

Before one can assume that all of this will be at their tongue-tips if they should meet it in real life, it's necessary to have them meet it while they're dealing with other structures, too. One possibility that I'd recommend is focused on the students' watches. Assuming that they've had a little experience with adjectives, names, with is, are, was, were, do, does and did, and can discriminate between a yes/no question and a WH question, the passive can be incorporated with all of these forms in the lesson described on page 8. No new structures, but a challenging combination of a number of basic forms.

If they're handling all of this well, then they need to increase their knowledge of the vocabulary of passive forms.

The next strategy I often refer to as my COFFEE TABLE, FRONT CLOSET, JUNK DRAWER lesson. You can find it described on page 9. Notice the addition of a new WH question: How was it made? And answering this question in the second manner expands vocabulary.

I'd like to note that here is where recognition of minimal pairs is meaningfully employed with students. For instance, wood and wool are both in this lesson. In such a context, the recognition and production of such a pair can be checked or practiced or emphasized or tested meaningfully.

Adding some items that have dates on them would make it possible to incorporate, "When was it made?" into this lesson.

Following these lesson strategies to this point will provide a lot of practice in question formation, will build confidence with certain prepositions, will enable lots of use of singular, plural, countable and uncountable items -- all handled with pronoun replacement in the second utterance -- and all pronounced at normal speed and intonation.

I haven't mentioned another progression, a kind of progression-in-reverse. That is the idea of gradually removing the supporting cues. One is hopeful that all of this practice will eventually lead to the students' ability to handle all of these structures without pictures and realia -- demonstrating totally verbal competence. Why not try it in class?

I have found that a lesson built around the context of what is done at the U.N. is a good one for this. If you're so far away from the U.N. that it's

too foreign, then a similar exercise built around any local place of fame or notoriety ought to work. Again, it's questions and answers, adding, at the end, WH_5; What is done? as a summary question. Before then, a lot of practice can be built around statements like:

Visitors are guided through the buildings.

Identification cards are checked at certain doors.

Many languages are spoken.

Gifts, books, souvenirs and stamps are sold.

Buses are parked outside the gates.

Meetings are held.

Speeches are made, translated, recorded, written.

Documents are sent and received.

Dignitaries are received.

Formal clothes are worn.

Credentials are presented.

Tea is served.

Flags are flown.

Records are kept.

There is just a small step from this kind of practice about the U. N. to communicative practice about the students' factories, offices, stores where they work.

This is really just a start. How many hours of instruction are represented here would vary from a few for some teachers and classes

to countless hours for others. Not all of the passive structures have yet been presented, but a good oral foundation has been set. I predict that after completing a group of lessons like these, most students could go to their texts and complete the conversion exercises with ease.

A number of other strategies come to mind. I was recently looking at a set of pictures that have often been used for the present progressive. Having the passive in mind, I saw them from a new point of view. Should I really teach that the little girl is swinging, and leave it at that? . . . the one whose father is behind her pushing her? Or should I incorporate into that early lesson the fact that the girl's father is pushing her in the swing and the girl is being pushed. Another in the same series: The man is repairing the radio and the radio is being repaired.

What I'm saying now is that my latest feeling is that we could begin teaching this active/passive division of the language from the beginning. In this particular case, the X word is the same so the yes/no answers would not multiply. Why wait so long for some of these easy lessons just because we've traditionally put them in the second year or the intermediate course?

Before I close, I'd like to comment on one more aspect of this approach. One doesn't have to tax one's imagination too much to see

the shadow of a Social Studies unit of learning in this ESL unit on the passive voice.

The cry for ESL in content subjects has been expressed during the past few months in journals ranging from legislative documents to our own NEWSLETTER. Thus, I have offered this presentation, not because it represents a flash of inspiration that has appeared to me since Watergate, but because doing so has forced me to attempt to spell out in specific terms, a kind of multi-focused teaching that many in adult education have been doing for a long time but have never taken the time to write down.

There is no doubt in my mind that this approach would transfer to programs that are more academic in orientation, such as the engineers-to-be in the university programs who need the passive voice for their technical materials, and especially the students in bilingual education programs who need to be learning concepts at the same time they're acquiring English. (Even adults who are quite well aware of the fact that oranges are grown in Florida, are often surprised that our famous potatoes are grown in Idaho. They also express some appreciation for learning that there is a State of Washington!)

If the students in bilingual programs are to be consciously acquiring two kinds of information at the same time, then there is no

question that teachers will have to be consciously presenting two kinds of information at the same time. I offer this as one way that it can be accomplished.

Thank you for your kind attention.

. . . illustrations and details to accompany

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FROM REPETITION TO MEANINGFUL USE

A SUGGESTED PROGRESSION

Darlene Larson

	Teacher	Students
1.	Present the statement form of the structure you're teaching. Model it with accompanying pictures or realia, in a context or in a situation. Use backward build-up until the students can	Repeat complete statement.
2.	Model yes/no answers to the structure you were just modeling and have the students . .	Repeat yes/no answers.
3.	Ask yes/no questions about the pictures or realia or the situations you presented. . . .	Produce meaningful yes/no answers.
4.	Model yes/no question	Repeat yes/no question.
5.	"Cue" or initiate student-student communication	Ask and answer yes/no questions about the realia.
6.	Ask "or" questions about the pictures or situation	Produce complete statement.
7.	Ask wh- question	Produce complete statement.
8.	Model wh- question	Repeat wh- question.
9.	Cue	Ask and answer yes/no and wh-
10.	Contrast with previously taught structures or persons or times. (Steps 3, 5, 7, 8, but with a combination of structures.) . . .	Answer and ask.
11.	Ask the same questions about the student (not the realia you brought) about his hometown, his apartment, his job, his friend, his world	Answer and ask.

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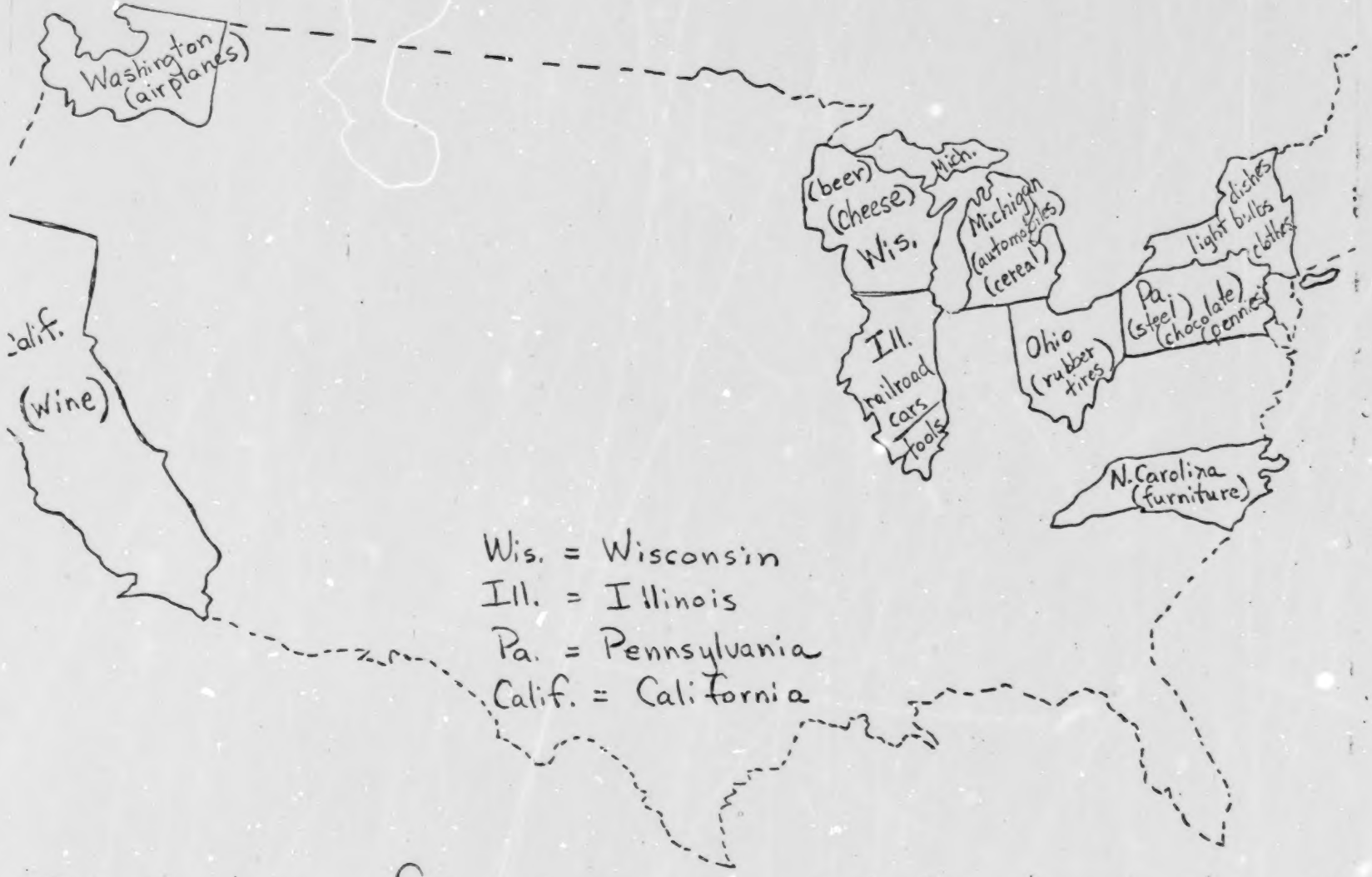

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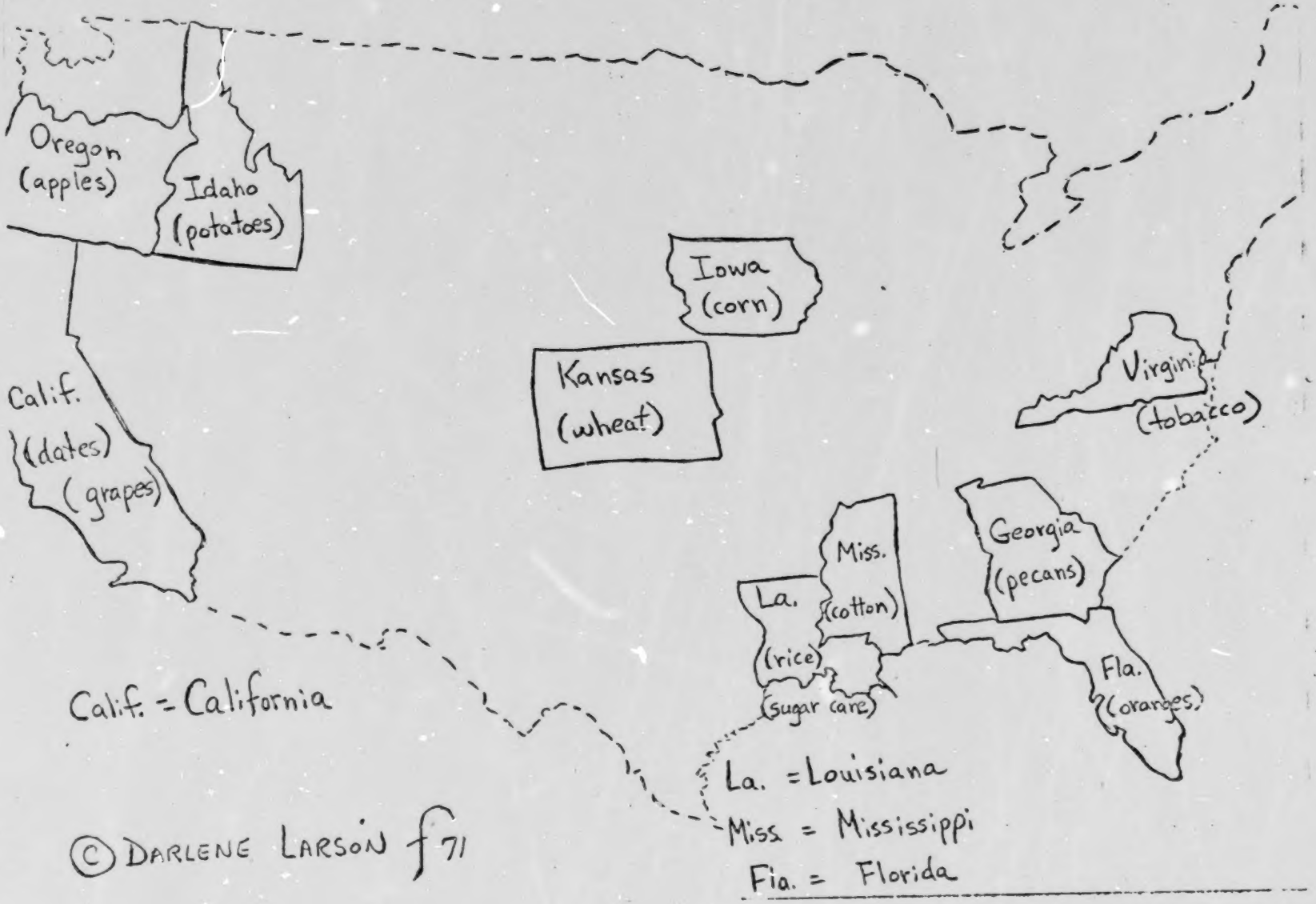
Oregon
(apples)
Idaho
(potatoes)
Iowa
(corn)
Kansas
(wheat)
Virginia
(tobacco)
Calif.
(dates)
(grapes)
Miss.
(cotton)
La.
(rice)
(sugar cane)
Georgia
(pecans)
Fla.
(oranges)
Calif. = California
La. = Louisiana
Miss = Mississippi
Fla. = Florida
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MAPS

A. _____ 's / _____s 're } grown / made } in _____.

B. Is _____ / Are _____s } grown / made } in _____?

Yes, it is.
No, it isn't.

Yes, they are.
No, they aren't.

C. WH_1 What's { made / grown } in _____?

_____ is.
_____ are.
(No reduction)

D. WH_2 Where's _____ / Where're _____s } made? / grown?

It's / They're } made / grown } in _____.

E. Optional: Made can be replaced with manufactured.

Both made and grown can be replaced with produced.

F. Move to students' countries -- then to home-towns

with WH_1 What's { made / grown } in { your / his / her } { country? / home-town?

9 FORMA DE UVAS MIRROR. Fine tin smithing is evident in this striking oval mirror and frame. Tiny birds nestle among clusters of grapes made 3-dimensional by hand tooling. All done in lustrous natural tin. 19" x 16½".
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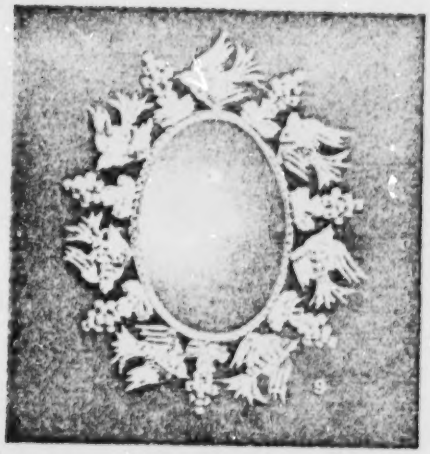
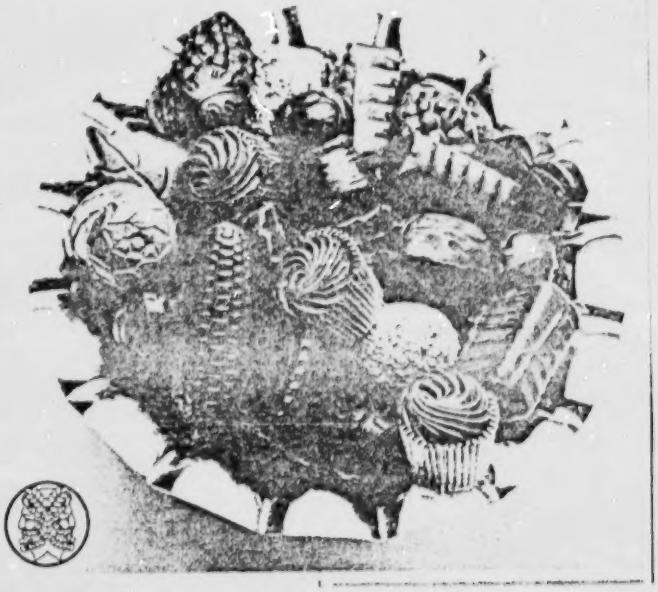
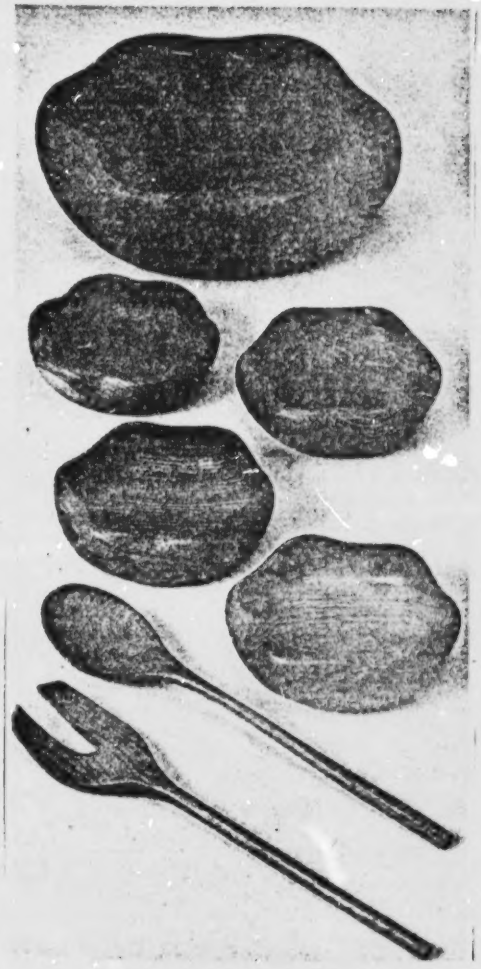


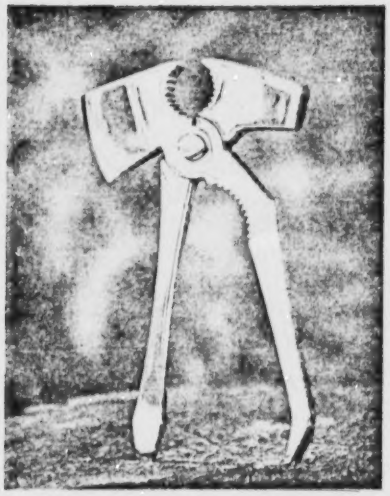
MEXICO



Corné de la Toison d'Or . . . really, the world's best chocolates, flown fresh from Belgium every week and only at Bloomingdale's in America. Fresh butter, fresh cream, pralines. The deepest, darkest, richest chocolate. Above: the traditional ballotins they're packed in.
(736-10A) 1 lb. (1.25) **5.50.**
(736-10B) 2 lb. (1.50) **11.00.**

Below: **14A** Spirited ski sweater made especially for us in West Germany. Navy body with distinctive red and white trim on shoulder. Tightly knitted in 100% wool. S,M,L,XL. **45.00**





Left: **20G** It's a hammer, pipe wrench, wire cutter, screw driver, pincer, hatchet, nail extractor. It's the famous seven-in-one Hausmeister tool in polished steel. From West Germany **13.50**

PICTURES OF MERCHANDISE DESCRIBED IN CATALOGS & BROCHURES

A. Is ⟹ Was

Are ⟹ Were

_____ was made in _____.

_____s were made in _____.

B. Was _____ } made in _____?
Were _____s }

Yes, it was.
No, it wasn't.

Yes, they were.
No, they weren't.

C. Where was _____ } made?
Where were _____s }

It was made in _____.

They were made in _____.

D. made of -- is/was optional

_____ is/was made of _____.

_____s are/were made of _____.

E. Is/Was _____ } made of _____?
Are/Were _____s }

Yes, it was.
No, it wasn't.

Yes, they were.
No, they weren't.

F. WH_3

What's
What was _____ } made of?
What're
What were _____s }

It's } made of _____.
They're }

MIX of passive and previously-taught forms

WRIST WATCHES AND WATCH BANDS OF THE CLASS MEMBERS

Start with statements, perhaps about your own watch.

Work through yes/no and WH questions to goal questions:

What kind is it? (This might be answered with brand names and/or with words like automatic, self-winding, battery-operated . . .)

Where was it made?

What's the band made of?

What color is it?

Is it round, oval or square?

Did you/he/she buy it, or was it given to you/him/her?

Does it have a calendar?

ITEMS FROM YOUR COFFEE TABLE, FRONT CLOSET AND JUNK DRAWER

a carved box from India
a wooden spoon
an ivory necklace from Africa
a woven basket from China
a glass dish
a linen napkin from Belgium/Ireland
wool mittens from Oregon
steel scissors from Sweden
a painted tray from Italy
a leather coin purse from Italy . . .

Goal Questions:

A. What {is it? / are they?}

B. Where {was it / were they} made?

C. What's {it / What're they} made of?

D. WH_4 How {was it / were they} made?

WH_4 a. It was / They were made {by hand. / by machine.}

WH_4 b. They were / It was {carved. / painted. / woven. / molded. / baked. / stained.}

E. Optional

The two ways to answer "How was it made?" are often transformed into a two-part adjective: It's a hand-carved necklace.
It's a machine-woven blanket.
They're hand-made mittens.